



Department of Dance and Theatre
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
SPRING 2026

Social Club Dance DANC 3710.001

Tuesday & Thursday: 3:00pm - 4:20pm

Location: DATH 111

Instructor: Emi Matsushita

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DATH Office Phone: 940-565-1121

Office hours: By appointment. Zoom or in-person (in DATH 103J)

Course Description:

This course explores social dance as a communal, embodied practice shaped by rhythm, culture, and social exchange. Through a range of global social dance traditions, students examine core concepts such as improvisation, groove, musicality, participation, connection, and cultural context. This will mostly be accomplished through an investigation of a wide range of cultural/social and folk dances including from the African & Latin American diaspora, exploring European & South Asian folk and circle dance, contemporary group dances, club/underground dances and street dance styles.

Emphasis is placed on low-barrier participation, individual expression within collective structures, and dance as a tool for communication and belonging. Through studio practice, reflection, and discussion, students develop embodied musical awareness, basic partnering and spatial skills, and the ability to create and analyze movement as a social and cultural practice.

Prerequisite(s): None

Required Texts:

No required texts. Supplemental readings from other sources may be assigned during the course and provided by the instructor.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- Perform foundational social dance techniques with attention to rhythm, musicality, coordination, sequencing, and (when applicable) partnering.
 - Demonstrate an embodied understanding of social dance traditions by connecting movement practice to historical and cultural contexts.
 - Create original movement phrases that reflect key elements of social dance, including groove, improvisation, individual expression, and connection with others.
 - Apply critical thinking through discussion, reflection, and peer feedback using oral, written, and movement-based communication.
 - Observe, analyze, and describe dance performance using clear and professional written language.
 - Maintain appropriate professionalism, accountability, and engagement expected in a collegiate studio environment.
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Classroom Etiquette & Student Expectations

- **Foster a respectful and inclusive learning environment.** Students are expected to practice empathy, maturity, and mutual respect, recognizing that learning new movement practices may feel unfamiliar or vulnerable.
- **Arrive prepared and on time.** Plan to arrive 5–10 minutes early to warm up and be ready to begin at the start of class. Proper preparation supports injury prevention and effective learning.

- **Be fully present.** Cell phones should be silenced and put away during class. Students are responsible for their own learning and active participation. Time may be provided at the end of class for recording when appropriate.
- **No food or gum during class.** Water is permitted and encouraged.
- **Engage with openness and commitment.** Maintain a positive mindset, participate fully, support peers, and take responsibility for personal growth. Consistent participation is essential for success in this course.
- **Check Canvas and email regularly** for course updates, announcements, and schedule changes.
- **Uphold professionalism at all times.** This is a university-level learning environment; respectful conduct, attentiveness, and accountability are expected throughout the course.
- **Address concerns promptly.** Behavioral issues may be addressed immediately by the instructor. Continued concerns may require collaborative resolution or, in rare cases, removal from class.
- **Know the syllabus and course calendar.** Students are responsible for understanding course requirements and seeking clarification when needed.

Attire

- Wear comfortable clothing that allows full freedom of movement. Attire reflecting the culture or characteristics of the dance form is welcome, provided it aligns with course expectations of professionalism, discretion, and respect.
 - Examples of acceptable attire: athletic wear, tank top, T-shirt, leggings, stretch pants, shorts of appropriate length, leotard and tights, barefoot, ballroom shoes, or clean soled tennis shoes.

- **No jeans/denim or pajamas. No gum. No jewelry.**
 - Hair may be required to be secured away from the face for certain activities or projects.
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Attendance Policy

Due to the experiential nature of studio-based courses, **regular attendance and full participation are required** to meet course learning objectives. Excessive absences will negatively impact a student's final grade.

- Students are allowed **two (2) absences**.
- On the **third absence**, the final course grade will be lowered by **5%** (e.g., 90% → 85%).
- On the **fourth absence**, the student will receive a **failing grade** for the course. The instructor may assign a **WF** in accordance with UNT policy.

Excused Absences

- Absences are excused **only** for documented personal or family emergencies or official university activities, subject to instructor approval.
- Students must notify the instructor **within one week** of the absence and submit appropriate documentation in alignment with [UNT Policy 06.039](#).
- Students may also contact the **Dean of Students** for assistance and advocacy when appropriate.

Illness & Injury Policy

- Students who are ill or injured must notify the instructor **as soon as possible** to develop a plan for continued engagement.

- Students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or exposure should contact the instructor immediately and follow **CDC and UNT guidelines**. Documentation may be required.
 - If illness or injury limits physical participation, students are still expected to attend class and engage through observation, note-taking, or modified participation unless otherwise directed. *Additional assignments may be assigned to support continued learning.*
 - Students unable to participate physically for **more than two consecutive weeks** may be advised to withdraw, receive an incomplete, or work with the Dean of Students for accommodations.
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Tardiness, Early Departure & Sitting Out

- Students must arrive **on time** and remain for the full class period.
- Arriving more than **5 minutes late** will result in a documented tardy and participation point deduction.
- Arriving more than **10 minutes late** may require sitting out due to injury risk and completing an alternative assignment.
- **Three tardies or early departures equal one absence.**
- Students who must sit out due to illness or injury must remain attentive, take notes, and submit observations at the end of class.
- Consistent sitting out without valid documentation will negatively affect the participation grade.

Late Work, Makeup Work, & Alternative Assignment Policy

- **No late work is accepted beyond the grace period.** Most assignments include a **24-hour grace period**; submissions after this window—even by one minute—will not be graded. Technical issues are **not** valid excuses.
 - If Canvas issues occur, students may email their submission **within the grace period**. Partial submissions receive partial credit and are preferable to no submission.
 - Makeup work or alternative assignments are **only permitted** for documented extenuating circumstances approved in accordance with **UNT Policy 06.039**.
 - Students must contact the instructor **within one week** of the missed assignment and provide valid documentation (e.g., medical provider, school official, coach, or family member), or work through the **Dean of Students**, who may verify and communicate the situation on the student's behalf.
 - Approved cases may require completion of an **alternative assignment or assessment/learning check-in** at the instructor's discretion.
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Course Evaluation Procedures:

Daily Participation:

The majority of your learning will be dependent on daily class participation. Your willingness to fully engage and show up consistently will be weighed heavily throughout the course. In order to achieve an exemplary grade in this course, the expectation is that you will consistently work to observe and uphold classroom etiquette, student expectations, and thoroughly complete assignments. It is also mandatory to abide by the attendance policy.

Daily Participation includes:

- o Partaking in the practical application of techniques, concepts, forms, etc.
- o Observing peers' practices in class and providing constructive feedback when requested

- o Actively listening to instructor or peers
- o Contributing to classroom discussions on topics (sharing insights, asking questions, etc.)
- o Engaging fully in group work activities throughout the term
- o Consistent attendance (see Attendance Policy)
- o If sitting out for any reason to only observe class, see section on “Sitting Out”.
- o Daily Participation is worth 60% of a student’s total grade in the course.
- o Daily participation is graded as **Complete or Incomplete**. A “Complete” is earned when a student is present and demonstrates intentional engagement through movement, observation, reflection, or peer support. An “Incomplete” is recorded for absences or lack of engagement. Participation is never graded on performance quality, physical ability, or skill level.

Assignments/ Learning Check-ins/Projects:

o Observation & Reflection Assignments (10%)

Periodic reflection activities will encourage students to observe and document movement practice—both their own and others’—and reflect on growth, experience, and understanding over time.

o Midterm Learning Check-in (15%)

The Midterm Learning Check-In is a reflective, practice-based review of student learning from the first half of the course. Students will engage in movement practice and verbal or written reflection to demonstrate understanding of course concepts, participation, and growth. This check-in prioritizes process, engagement, and integration rather than performance quality. The

o Final Group Project (15%)

Students will complete a collaborative project that involves creating original movements informed by course content. Work must reflect the techniques, principles, and cultural contexts of prior social dance forms studied. Students are observed both individually and as a group, including participation in a freestyle/improvisational ‘cypher’.

o *Extra Credit*: Limited extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester and will be posted in Canvas. In some cases, approved extra credit may be used to offset a recorded absence.

Grading Breakdown	Grade Weight (%)		Grading Scale	
Daily Participation: attendance, in-class participation	60%		100-90%	A
Peer/Self Observation & Reflection (periodic)	10%		89-80%	B
Midterm Learning Check-in	15%		79-70%	C
Final Group Project	15%		69-60%	D
TOTAL:	100%		Below 60%	F

Cheating/Plagiarism:

NO cheating or plagiarism is allowed. If caught, you will receive a “FAIL” for the assignment and you may be removed from the class! The University upholds a strict policy on academic dishonesty. This can also include falsifying your attendance or misrepresenting work.

Course Schedule

JAN 13 (Tu) JAN 15 (TH)	Syllabus review & introduction. Defining social dance & space. <i>Improvisation, Participation & Belonging</i> : Circle Dances (African diaspora)
JAN 20 (Tu) JAN 22 (TH)	<i>Groove, Pulse & Group Awareness</i> : Hora/Eastern European Cultural dances *Self & peer observation & reflection
JAN 27 (Tu) JAN 29 (TH)	<i>Rhythm, Musical Awareness, Collective Energy</i> : Bhangra (Punjabi folk)
FEB 3 (Tu) FEB 5 (TH)	<i>Community, Pattern/Form & Social Exchange</i> : Line dancing
FEB 10 (Tu) FEB 12 (TH)	<i>Individual Groove & Choice making</i> : Club dancing (House)
FEB 17 (Tu) FEB 19 (TH)	No Class Self & peer observation & reflection group work
FEB 24 (Tu) FEB 26 (TH)	Review/Midterm prep
MAR 3 (Tu) MAR 5 (TH)	Midterm Learning Check-in, 1:1 check ins

MAR 10 (Tu) MAR 12 (TH)	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>
MAR 17 (Tu) MAR 19 (W)	<i>Musicality, Dynamics and Style : Hip Hop party grooves</i>
MAR 24 (Tu) MAR 26 (TH)	<i>Connection, Consent & Responsiveness : Latin dancing (Salsa)</i>
MAR 31 (Tu) APR 2 (TH)	<i>History, Function & Social Meaning : Lindy Hop/Swing *Self & peer observation & reflection group work</i>
APR 7 (Tu) APR 9 (TH)	<i>Expression, Personal Style & Confidence: Voguing & Waacking</i>
APR 14 (Tu) APR 16 (TH)	<i>Improvisational Exchanges: Dance competition (battles), Cypher/Social Jam</i>
APR 21 (Tu) APR 23 (TH)	<i>Synthesism Reflection & Celebration: Final Group Project prep & review</i>
APR 28 (Tu) APR 30 (TH)	<i>Final Group Project and cypher/dance jam</i>
MAY 5 (Tu) MAY 7 (TH)	<i>No Class for finals week (Final self reflection work due)</i>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (Policy 06.003)

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities (ODA Statement) (Policy 16.001)

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every

semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu."

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward email. (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Course Evaluation (SPOT)

Student feedback is important to help improve the quality of instruction and student experience in their courses. The SPOT (Student Perceptions of Teaching) survey allows students to submit confidential feedback on their experiences. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Technical Requirements/Assistance:

If you ever have any issues with the technical systems needed to access course resources, correspondences, or for assignment submissions. Please contact the instructor and also the UNT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm> or through email: helpdesk@unt.edu.
Phone: 940.565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Code of Conduct (Policy 07.012):

The University of North Texas is deeply committed to advancing educational excellence and preparing students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens of a diverse, global community. The University has established the Code of Student Conduct to promote the wellbeing, honor and dignity of all who live, learn and work in our educational community. The Code of Student Conduct is intended to foster a safe environment conducive to learning and development, as well as to hold students accountable through an educational process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the University. Students and student groups are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect for the rights and property of others and upholds the integrity and values of the University community.